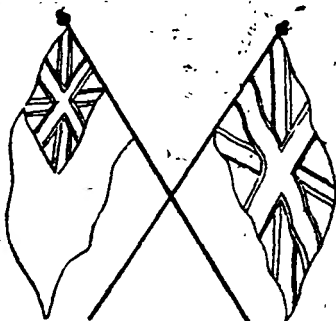


.. Our ..
Scandinavian Missions.
Alberta, N. W. T.



Canada Congregational Missionary Society.
Educational and Information Department.

REV. FRANK J. DAY, EDUCATIONAL SECRETARY,
SHERBROOKE, QUE.
1904.



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REV. G. A. SANDEN.

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Our Scandinavian Missions.

OUR FIELD: Alberta, N.W.T.

OUR MISSIONARY: Rev. G. A. Sanden.

OUR MISSION STATIONS: Westaskiwin, Lewisville,
Highland Park,

NORTHERN ALBERTA.

Rev. Galen H. Craik, B. A., pastor of the Congregational church at Waterville, visited northern Alberta in the summer of 1903, and gives us his impressions of the country and the possibilities of our mission as follows:—

Northern Alberta, beginning at a point forty miles north of Calgary and stretching two hundred miles to the northward, of which Edmonton is the chief town and centre, is destined to be one of the most populous and prosperous sections of our Canadian Northwest.

In appearance the country presents a happy medium between the majestic mountains of British Columbia and the monotonous dead levels of the prairie farther east. A rolling country, "billowy heavings and sinkings as of some primeval sea hushed into motionlessness, soft slopes of gray grass falling gently to the creek bottoms, woodland fringing here and there." "A country of fine and lucid air, of far clearly outlined distances," charming in its variety of valley, hill and dale.

It is splendidly watered, springs, creeks, rivers and lakes abounding. The soil is a deep, rich, alluvial mould. The wild grass is ordinarily found rising to the knee, in many places to the waist and shoulder of the average man. The rain fall is ample, the winters are milder than those of eastern Ontario and Quebec, the air is a tonic in its health giving powers, and it is a land of almost steady sunshine, with the exception of three months of spring and early summer. With a rich soil, well watered, and a well nigh perfect climate, you have a combination as perfect for grain growing and dairying, the production of beef and pork as exists in our country.

In 1893 Scandinavians largely from the western states began to settle in Alberta, and now owing to the energetic efforts of Mr. C. O. Swanson, Scandinavian Immigration Agent, fully twelve thousand of these people are living in Northern Alberta. The main settlement is situated east of Wetaskiwin, the foremost town on the Calgary and Edmonton railway, 150 miles north of Calgary and 40 miles south of Edmonton. The settlements extend east for fully 50 miles, and in scattering groups northeast to beyond Vegreville, a distance of fully 100 miles. Westward of Leduc, 25 miles north of Wetaskiwin, on the Calgary and Edmonton railway, is another settlement, occupying two or three townships.

The heaviest and most productive soil in Alberta is to be found around Wetaskiwin and Leduc. It is a rich, black mould, one to two feet in depth, on a deep clay sub-soil.

During a visit to Alberta the past summer, I had the pleasure of calling on Mr. Sanden, our pastor at Wetaskiwin, and seeing the country and a few of his people.

In Mr. Sanden we have a leader, who, if adequately supported, could even at this late day, if provided with say four assistants and sufficient Home Mission funds, pre-empt a large share of the above settlements for our denomination, for these people prefer our body to all others, and have proved their faith by refusing the offer of a mission board of another denomination to pay their pastor's salary and to put at once three or four additional men in the field, and erect churches as required.



**SCANDINAVIAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
SIX MILES S.E. FROM WESTASKIWIN, ALTA., CAN.**

On August 17th, 1903, some three miles from the Wetaskiwin Congregational church, I stood beside a field of wheat, and looked across its level floor-like surface just even with my eyes. That field on thrashing yielded just 45 bushels to the acre. Oats gave a yield of from 80 to 100 bushels per acre. The farmers on such a soil will be wealthy and when they happen to prefer our church, to be a people with a genius for religion, and all experience proves will require aid only for a little while, when they will gladly assume self-support and to begin to aid others—the denomination so preferred should not prove recreant to a great opportunity.

OUR MISSIONARY AND HIS WORK.

Writing to the Educational Secretary under date Nov. 2nd, 1903, Mr. Sanden expresses his gratification and joy at the evidences of interest and sympathy that have been shown in his work. He speaks most hopefully of its growth and especially of the encouraging increase in the Sunday Schools. To his field, he says, there is practically no limit. He knows families fifty miles to the north, south and east, to whom he might be called out at any time to "either baptize a child, or bury an old man." He thus describes one of his long trips:—

"Last winter I was out for three weeks steady, not being home at all. I drove then about two hundred miles north and east. I gathered the people in the small log houses and they all bade me come again. It was a hard trip. It was cold—35 degrees below zero. It was hard to get a place to stop over night, and difficult to get proper food. I don't like to be away from home so long but duty often calls and we must go."

In August, 1903, Rev. W. J. Hindley, who was acting as Provisional Superintendent for British Columbia and the North West, visited this field and afterwards gave his im-



**A SETTLER'S HOME,
SEVEN MILES S.E. OF WESTASKIWIN, ALTA., CAN.**

pressions of the work in a letter which appeared in the Canadian Congregationalist. In this he says :—

"Arriving on the field on a Saturday afternoon, I was met at the depot by our missionary, Rev. G. A. Sanden, and Mr. C. O. Swanson, Dominion Immigration Agent, and driven out six miles in the country, to the first of our stations, where the minister makes his home. Here we have a very pretty country church, seating over 200, the building just now being renovated and improved, at an expenditure of \$200—all subscribed by the people. The service Sunday morning was in Swedish, Mr. Sanden leading the people in the devotional exercises, and the reverent, worshipful spirit of the people was most noticeable, even though the Scripture reading, prayers and hymns were in an unknown tongue. As best I could I brought the people my message on "The True Church of Christ," and was pleased to find they understood me so well.

"After dinner we drove over fifteen miles, across to Battle River, and the Lewisville District, where our second church is. Here I found a new church building, costing at least \$800, and am glad to report that the people here have risen nobly to the occasion and have subscribed this money in full so that no outside help is likely to be required for the building fund of either of these churches. Ten miles farther on to the east we come to the Highland Park settlement, where as yet we have no church organization, but which promises to be by far the strongest station on the field. Mr. Sanden keeps up regular services here, and has a splendid choir, which he trains himself, and uses on other points in his field. Ten or twelve miles east and south from here is Meeting Creek, where a splendid opportunity for work is to be found, but as it is over thirty-five miles away, Mr. Sanden has only been able to visit them occasionally.

It would be impossible in this brief report to present a true picture of Mr. Sanden and his splendid work on these fields, of the almost insuperable difficulties he has met and mastered in the work here, and of the spiritual service he has rendered to these people, but one illustration may indicate it. It is Mr. Sanden's custom to take about three weeks' holiday (?) every year, sometimes twice during the

year, and drive over 100 miles, visiting the different settlements and preaching nearly every evening if he could gather a few of the scattered families together. On one of these visits he heard of a man who could play the autoharp, so he went to him, and after much opposition persuaded him to come to the little meeting and help with the music. Some months after his return home a messenger on horse-back brought word of the death of a child in this man's home requesting Mr. Sanden to conduct the funeral, and though it was over fifty miles away, he went and brought the gospel of comfort to the sorrowing home. A few weeks later, looking out of his home window one evening, he was surprised to see an ox-wagon, with a very small yoke of oxen, ploughing through the notorious Albertan mud, a woman sitting in the wagon, and the driver walking beside the cattle, and to his surprise, when the strange equipage drew up to his door, he found the people to be the man and wife whose little one he had buried. They had come over fifty miles with an ox-team to hear the minister pray with them and speak God's Word of Grace to their troubled hearts, and after a night's rest they started back on their way rejoicing, because the "Light of Life" had burst in upon their souls.

Mr. Sanden is a man well trained academically, being a graduate (1896) of Chicago Seminary, and perfectly fitted physically, being six feet high, weighing 185 pounds, possessing the strength that knows no weariness, and is doing a work on this field that can scarcely be surpassed in its elements of interest and promise by any foreign missionary work.

His noble wife, although a city-bred woman, is braving the isolation and many privations of this pioneer life; she is superintendent of one of the Sunday schools, and president of almost innumerable societies, and is the confidant and friend of all.

They minister to over 200 families in a district over fifty miles across, and they must have more helpers. There is need for two more men on the field, but even with one more man much could be done.

Mr. Sanden has worked here for \$400 a year, and has kept two horses and worn them out in the awful mud and

snows and long drives of his extensive pastorate. To this salary we have been contributing \$200 a year. I am glad to say the people have at my request increased their contributions \$50 for the year, and I have assured them that our Society would increase the grant \$50, making \$500 for Mr. Sanden for the coming year.

Now another helper will mean an extra \$400 grant. Will our churches warrant the enlarging of this work by increasing their gifts to Home Missions? The people here are willing, but poor; they are only laying the foundations of their homes—some of them are living in tents. They lost all their crop by hail last year, and yet they will raise nearly \$1,400 on these fields this year.

Shall we express our faith in them and our interest in the great Western country by subscribing our money and sending new workers into this great field? Let the Congregationalists answer!"

NOTE.—Steps have already been taken to secure another missionary and to further extend the work.

Additional copies of this pamphlet for distribution may be secured from the Educational Secretary.

